

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A vehicle surrounding area imaging system comprising:  
an image acquiring device configured and arranged to acquire images of peripheral side areas of a vehicle equipped with the vehicle surrounding area imaging system;

5 a position detecting device configured and arranged to detect a current vehicle position of the vehicle;

a startup imaging device configured and arranged to detect predetermined road regions that require one of the images of the peripheral side areas of the vehicle to be displayed based on the current vehicle position detected by the position detecting device as  
10 well as map information; and

an image displaying device configured and arranged to selectively display one of the images acquired by the image acquiring device before the vehicle enters into one of the predetermined road regions that was detected by the startup imaging device.

15 2. The vehicle surrounding area imaging system as recited in claim 1, wherein the startup imaging device is configured and arranged to detect a traffic merging area where at least two roads merge as at least one type of the predetermined road regions.

3. The vehicle surrounding area imaging system as recited in claim 1, wherein  
20 the startup imaging device is configured and arranged to detect a traffic circle as at least one type of the predetermined road regions.

4. The vehicle surrounding area imaging system as recited in claim 1, wherein  
the startup imaging device is configured and arranged to detect a traffic  
25 intersection where at least two roads merge as at least one type of the predetermined road regions.

5. The vehicle surrounding area imaging system as recited in claim 1, wherein the startup imaging device is configured and arranged to detect a traffic branch point where at least two roads branch out as at least one type of the predetermined road regions.

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6. The vehicle surrounding area imaging system as recited in to claim 1, wherein the startup imaging device is configured and arranged to detect an overpass as at least one type of the predetermined road regions.

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7. The vehicle surrounding area imaging system as recited in claim 1, wherein the startup imaging device is configured and arranged to detect a T-intersection as at least one type of the predetermined road regions.

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8. The vehicle surrounding area imaging system as recited in claim 1, wherein the image displaying device is configured and arranged to selectively display one of the images of the peripheral side areas of the vehicle from among the images acquired by the image acquiring device based on road configuration through one of the predetermined road regions.

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9. The vehicle surrounding area imaging system as recited in claim 1, wherein the image displaying device is configured and arranged to display the images of both of the peripheral side areas of the vehicle acquired by the image acquiring device when a route of the vehicle is not uniquely specified.

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10. The vehicle surrounding area imaging system as recited in claim 1, wherein the position detecting device is configured and arranged to set a specific travel route of the vehicle, and

the image displaying device is configured and arranged to selectively display one of the images of the peripheral side areas of the vehicle from among images acquired by the image acquiring device based on the specific route that was set by the position detecting device.

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11. The vehicle surrounding area imaging system as recited in claim 1, wherein the startup determination device is configured and arranged to determine an image displaying location that is a prescribed distance prior to one of the predetermined road regions that was detected, and

10 the image displaying device is configured and arranged to displays selected ones of the images acquired by the image acquiring device when the vehicle is detected by the position detecting device to have passed the image displaying location.

12. The vehicle surrounding area imaging system as recited in claim 1, further  
15 comprising

a vehicle speed detecting device configured and arranged to detect current vehicle speed of the vehicle,

the startup determination device being configured and arranged to determine a  
calculated distance that the vehicle travels in a prescribed time based on the current  
20 vehicle speed detected by the vehicle speed detecting device, and also determine an image displaying location that corresponds to the prescribed time prior to one of the predetermined road regions that that was detected,

the image displaying device being configured and arranged to selectively display  
one of the images acquired by the image acquiring device when the vehicle passes the  
25 image displaying location to display at least one of the images for the prescribed time before the vehicle enters one of the predetermined road regions.

13. A vehicle surrounding area imaging system comprising:  
image acquiring means for acquiring images of peripheral side areas of a vehicle  
30 equipped with the vehicle surrounding area imaging system;

position detecting means for detecting a current vehicle position of the vehicle;

startup image determination means for detecting predetermined road regions that require one of the images of the peripheral side areas of the vehicle to be displayed based on the current vehicle position detected by the position detecting means as well as map

5 information; and

image display means for selectively displaying images acquired by the image acquiring means before the vehicle enters into one of the predetermined road regions that was detected by the startup image determination means.

10 14. A method of displaying images in a vehicle comprising:

acquiring images of peripheral side area sof the vehicle;

detecting a current vehicle position of the vehicle;

detecting predetermined road regions that require one of the images of the peripheral side areas of the vehicle to be displayed based on the current vehicle position

15 and map information; and

selectively displaying one of the images of the peripheral side areas of the vehicle before the vehicle enters into one of the predetermined road regions.